

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 348

By DeBerry L

A RESOLUTION to create a special joint committee to study the disproportionate confinement of minorities in the juvenile justice system.

WHEREAS, the confinement of juveniles, while perhaps a necessary part of creating a just society, is a serious punishment which should be delivered only with the greatest amount of consideration and never as a first option; and

WHEREAS, in 2000, 20% of the State's 12-17 year-old population was comprised of African-Americans; however, African-Americans accounted for 70% of the juveniles held in Tennessee's secure detention centers throughout that year; and

WHEREAS, in fiscal year 2003, African-American children accounted for 21.4% of the State's juvenile population, 38% of Tennessee's delinquent population as recorded by the Department of Children's Services, and yet accounted for nearly 46% of the population of the State's Youth Development Centers; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that there is hereby created a special joint committee to study issues pertaining to the overrepresentation of minorities in confinement within Tennessee's juvenile justice system and to determine appropriate legislative actions to address and remedy such overrepresentation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee shall consist of four (4) members of the House of Representatives and four (4) members of the Senate, to be appointed by the respective speakers, as well as the following persons to be appointed by the governor: one (1)

representative of the department of children's services; one (1) representative of the Tennessee public school system; one (1) psychologist, social worker, or other social and behavioral health professional who has experience in the incidence of recidivism among juvenile offenders and the effects of confinement on juveniles; one (1) representative of the council of juvenile and family court judges; one (1) representative of the district attorneys general conference; one (1) representative of local law enforcement; and one (1) representative of a juvenile detention facility. The members of the special committee appointed by the Governor shall be appointed in such a manner as to equitably represent the three geographic Grand Divisions of the State of Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the special joint committee shall be independent of all existing special, select and joint committees of the General Assembly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all appropriate state agencies shall provide assistance to the special joint committee upon request of the chair.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each legislative member of the special joint committee who is a duly elected member of the General Assembly shall remain a member of such committee until the committee reports its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly, provided that such member continues to serve as a member of the General Assembly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the members of the committee who are members of the General Assembly shall be compensated or reimbursed for expenses according to the requirements of Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 3, Chapter 1. All reimbursement for travel expenses for members of the committee who are not members of the General Assembly shall be in accordance with the provisions of the comprehensive travel regulations as promulgated by the department of finance and administration and approved by the attorney general.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the special joint committee shall be convened by the member with the most years of continuous service in the General Assembly, and at its first meeting shall elect a chair, vice chair, and such other officers as the committee deems necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the special joint committee shall timely report its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the One Hundred Fifth General Assembly no later than February 15, 2008, at which time the committee shall cease to exist.